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ABSTRACT

A concise overview is provided of the history of evaluation, focusing on educational evaluation, followed by some observations on program evaluation in Spain and possible future developments. Evaluation was a new concept in Spain at the end of the Franco era, at a time when its development was beginning to gain momentum in the United States. The evolution of evaluation in Spain has been conditioned by the political climate and the relationships between central and regional governments, the absence of a participatory tradition, the lack of evaluation specialists, and the need to balance individual and collective rights. The evaluation model that has to be developed in Spain must be fundamentally based on negotiation. Evaluation should be interpreted as a negotiation process that facilitates deeper understanding of all audiences of the object to be evaluated. The challenges in Spain will be to facilitate the professional work of evaluators so that evaluation can contribute to the democratic structure of society and to increase efficiency in organizational functioning by establishing more participatory models. (Contains nine references.) (SLD)

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SUMMARY:

Introduction (page 1)

We shall subdivide this analysis into two sections: firstly, a concise overview of the history of evaluation, and secondly, some observations on the present situation and possible future developments.

The initial usage of the concept (pages 1-3)

Evaluation was one of the new concepts introduced by Villar Palasí's law, at a time, when its development was beginning to gain momentum in the USA. On being adopted by the Spanish educational system, this term retained its double meaning. On the one hand, school inspectors used it to refer to their function of control and supervision, thereby converting assessment into an internal method exclusive to the administrative sphere of education.

The Reform of the Educational System, democracy and modernization (pages 3-4)

The first Socialist government (1982) initiated and saw the beginning of a long process of experimentation and development of new curricula that included contributions from the so-called pedagogical renovation movements and which firstly led to the publication of a series of documents for public debate.

One may expect the proliferation of evaluation models designed to suit better the linguistical and socio-cultural context of each individual population. At the same time, one would foresee a certain reluctance of regional administrations - or agreements in order to come to terms with the central government - regarding their responsibilities in the evaluation of the educational system within Spain as a whole.

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How are these evaluations carried out? What are their main features? (pages 4-8)

The characteristics of the first evaluations on an institutional level carried out as a part of the Reform of the Spanish Educational System were basically caused by the lack of experience in evaluation of the designers.
The evolution of evaluation here in Spain is conditioned by the following factors:

A political framework defined by the relationship between central and regional governments.

A professional context mainly influenced by the interests of civil servants and almost totally lacking participatory tradition.

The lack of institutions and professionals specialized in evaluation.

The need to find a balance between, on the one hand, individual and collective rights, and on the other, the demands for simplified and comprehensible forms of communication and information.

The vindication brought forward by the citizens for greater clearness and transparency.

A possible evaluation alternative (pages 8-11)

In this context we understand that the evaluation model that has to be developed in Spain, and which could at present satisfy the conditions we have pointed out, must be fundamentally based on negotiation. This implies interpreting evaluation as a negotiation process which facilitates a deeper understanding for all the audiences of the object to be evaluated, in order to give them the opportunity to bring forward their judgements on the subject.
Independence, communication, representation, participation, publication and qualitative methodology are the driving concepts of the evaluation by negotiation model we propose.

As a conclusion, in our opinion the challenge facing evaluation in Spain consists in facilitating two fundamental aspects: the professionalization of the work of the evaluaters, conferring them their own entity, credibility and acknowledgment, so that evaluation, conceived as evaluation by negotiation, might contribute to create a democratic structure in society, from a methodologically competent and politically independent perspective; and bringing greater efficiency into the functioning of organisations by establishing more participatory models, based on the understanding of situations and personal responsibility, thus promoting systems capable of learning through organisational forms based on cooperation and fluent - that means, not hierarchic - communication channels.

Negotiated Program Evaluation in Spain

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Introduction

In Spain, the use of evaluation has a very short history. Its beginnings date back to a time not more than 15 years ago, and it has been influenced to a great extent by the country's political evolution and institutional development. We might say that the history of evaluation in Spain is the history of its institutions, i.e., it is the result of the convergence, on the one hand, of conceptual influences from outside (the other countries of the western hemisphere, especially the USA, the United Kingdom and France) which have been mediated and filtered by the universities, and, on the other, the political changes in the educational system and the features and working methods of the administration and its decentralisation process, which even today remains unfinished. These three elements – ideas from outside the country, political and institutional change – have been faced by a lack of tradition with regard to evaluation, which has shown a strong dependency on political decisions and concept models that arise from the studies of Social Science at Spanish Universities, although the present evolution in this field seems to be promising.

Consequently, we shall subdivide this analysis into two sections: firstly, a concise overview of the history of evaluation, and secondly, some observations on the present situation and possible future developments.

The initial usage of the concept.

The origins of the history of evaluation have to be traced back to the 70s – the last decade of Franco's dictatorship – a time in which the respective governments started carrying out a policy of openness towards foreign countries and of technocratic modernisation of the power structures in order to cope with the symptoms of decay shown by the regime: internal and foreign demonstrations and movements against the regime and in favour of democracy became widespread. Under these circumstances the Ley General de Educación (The General Education Act) was passed as a result of the "enlightened" activities of Villar Palasí – then Minister of Education. This law, which provided for free and compulsory elementary education for children between 6 and 14, entailed the introduction of new concepts and ideas into the educational system, partly due to the pressure exerted by the new generation of intellectuals serving the regime, and basically due to the fact that it had become necessary to adapt the educational system to new economic conditions and production needs. This new situation implied a gradual opening of the educational system itself towards new ideas coming basically from the USA, which was at that moment the only country to establish important

cultural relationships with Spain, a nation isolated by all its neighbouring democratic countries. Moreover, it was precisely the generation of children and young people that experienced the transition from the old educational system to the new one that forged the idea that political change might be possible – an idea which became the central aspect of their identity. The movement pressing for the change to a new political system in Spain arose among the university students and soon spread to secondary students, together with an important sector of industry workers, that had started work only recently at the large companies that were settling in the outskirts of the most important cities.

Evaluation was one of the new concepts introduced by Villar Palasí's law, at a time, when its development was beginning to gain momentum in the USA. On being adopted by the Spanish educational system, this term retained its double meaning. On the one hand, school inspectors used it to refer to their function of control and supervision, thereby converting assessment into an internal method exclusive to the administrative sphere of education (Casanova, M.A., 1992). On the other hand, on primary and secondary levels, evaluation was introduced under pressure, basically as a form of academic classification and graduation and as a means of encouraging them. As far as the inspectors were concerned, the notions of evaluation were interpreted in a predominantly quantitative fashion, devoid of systemization, and simply served the purpose of gathering "personal" information on those members of the entity who did not meet the requirements of the establishment.In addition, it has to be said that the inspectors' functions were not adequately specified and that they received no specific training in evaluation. As a result, the number of studies carried out was low, and, moreover, the number of those which became known outside their particular sphere of action was even lower. As to the second meaning given to evaluation, due to the absence of communication between politicians and teachers, the only thing which was adopted in the end was the term itself. There were "evaluation meetings" to assess the students' performance, in which the teachers "read out" the grades – achieved in the end-of-term examinations– which also are denominated "evaluations". The teachers issue general evaluations of each pupil which are used to decide whether it is convenient or not to move him or her up to the next education level. But this task was introduced without the prior formulation of criteria to govern it: as a consequence, the assessment in reality focussed on the "learning" of contents – which in most cases meant simple learning by heart.

Given this form of evaluation, which exclusively focussed on the pupils and was confined within a highly centralised and prescriptive curricular programme, and which besides, in public education, was carried out by teachers in tune with the prevailing ideology and having almost exclusively bureaucratic mentality, the newly introduced concepts degraded into terms which formed part of an official rhetoric, accepted but never really used in a way that fully reflected their meaning. This superficial concept of assessment, however, became set in the minds of primary-school teachers, who were to coin the term *continuous assessment* by the end of the seventies and in the eighties. The theoretical foundation of this concept was provided entirely by the Education faculties at Spanish universities, which embodied the different tendencies of thought within the Catholic Church, and which provided the Ministry of Education with a source intermediate authority.

In short, the educational system that was created by the General Education Act indirectly helped to intensify expectations for an opening of the political system, but also consolidated and extended both the bureaucratic nature of the body of teachers and a

rhetorical and impoverished conception of assessment, which at best was understood as a means of governmental control over teachers and a sort of accountancy of their educational work (Barrio, L., 1989).

The reform of the educational system, democracy and modernization

After the years of political transition towards democracy (1975–80), the Socialist Party came to power. Their intellectuals and experts on educational matters (with a strong tendency towards the educational tradition of Anglo-Saxon countries), established the modification of the foundations of the Educational System as their priority. Their aim was to simultaneously adapt the system both to the new liberal-democratic political system that had emerged after the end of the dictatorship and to the international framework, in particular the European one, in which Spain was to be integrated. Consequently, it had to be brought in line with the new state of affairs as regards Spain's economic relations

This was in fact the first time ever that we could talk of education authorities having introduced a change in the conception of curriculum development. In our opinion, the said change – which initially was proclaimed in quite radical fashion and without taking into account the economic demands brought forward by the teachers – provoked massive response (the teachers'strikes in the years 1987 and 1988), which in turn caused the authorities to approach the Educational Reform as a gradual change of ideas and educational practice. The first Socialist government (1982) initiated and saw the beginning of a long process of experimentation and development of new curricula that included contributions from the so-called pedagogical renovation movements and which firstly led to the publication of a series of documents for public debate: A Draft Bill for Educational Reform (1987), a White Paper on Educational Reform (1989) and Basic Curricular Design (1989); secondly, the resulting debate gave rise to the LOGSE Act (Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo – General Arrangement of the Educational System Act) and other bills concerning nationwide compulsory minimum education (Sáez, M.J., 1993). Parallel to such experiments and discussion about Educational Reform, a decentralization process was initiated, reorganising the adminstrative and political system into Autonomous Regions, some of which (the so-called historical ones) were conferred competences in the educational sphere and carried out their own experimentation and discussion about the Reform. As consequence of the interaction of all the resulting political, professional and economic intentions and interests, the need arises to reflect on the methods and procedures of evaluation by which such experimentation can be assessed. This consideration constitutes an important step towards the evaluation of experimental education programmes. Examples of such programmes are the following: Integration of the Physically and Mentally Handicapped in Child Education (1989), Reform of Secondary Education (1990), Programmes for the Application of New Technologies to Education (1991), Evaluation of Teachers' Centres (1990–93). Most of the evaluation is still carried out by the central authorities, a fact that reflects the centralism that still remains in the institutions and the beginning decentralization process. Evaluation is therefore also carried out at universities, in professional training centres and as a part of programmes implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The only Autonomous Regions or City Councils to consider carrying out evaluations of their own educational or social programmes are those whose administration is marked by political criteria of an independent nature (curiously enough, they are all Socialist-run).Examples of programmes evaluated in

this way are: the Autonomous Region of Madrid's Programme for Centres (1990), Multiprofessional Service Programme and Programme for Infant Schools (1991), Programme for Equal Opportunities introduced by the Regional Government of Andalucía (1993), and programmes of the City Council of Barcelona.

As a result of certain constitutional imperatives, the Autonomous Regions of Spain are gradually acquiring various political and administrative competences, among which are those concerning education. Evaluation in this situation of decentralization to some extent follows the patterns established by the central government and makes use of the academic knowledge gathered in the universities located within their territory.

Consequently, one may expect the proliferation of evaluation models designed to suit better the linguistical and socio-cultural context of each individual population. At the same time, one would foresee a certain reluctance of regional administrations - or agreements in order to come to terms with the central government - regarding their responsibilities in the evaluation of the educational system within Spain as a whole.

How are these evaluations carried out? What are their main features?

To give a general outline, we might say that whilst the evaluation procedures carried out by the central government are a mixture of a search for forms of controlling decentralization and a means of justifying the introduction of policies, those undertaken by local and regional authorities go further towards facilitating the taking of decisions on the programmes to be implemented. We shall focus, however, first of all on the evaluation procedures carried out within the framework of the Reform of the Educational System, and after that on the other programmes.

On one hand, the evaluations undertaken at the request of the Ministry of Education include - due to the provisional character of the projects to be evaluated - a fundamental political component. What this political nature implies is that to a great extent the ultimate purpose of such assessments is to justify and demonstrate the properties and the quality of the innovational measures that are put forward both as a replacement for traditional educational methods typical of the former educational system - and also, therefore, as a means of publicising new ideas and of persuading both teachers and other undecided sectors of the population of the need for change. Obviously, this intentional search for the benefits of the programmes implies the risk of conditioning the methodology and the procedures of evaluation employed. Although possibly there is a certain methodological variety in the development of these evaluation procedures, we can summarize some common aspects as follows:

Firstly, although evaluations have always been carried out by external personnel, on the whole it has been directed or oriented - either directly or indirectly - from inside the very Ministry of Education. The result has been the appearance of a number of different combinations of external and internal aspects: ranging from clear intervention by the responsible educational authority in the evaluation (Integration Programme) to an almost fervent zeal for exteriorisation (Evaluation of the Atenea Programme carried out by OECD experts), with an intermediate situation of relative mixture between external experts - from

the universities – and internal experts working for the administration (Reforms of Secondary Education).

Secondly, the majority of these evaluations were set up with quantitative methodology, which were justified by the extension and dispersion of the sample. This implied the widespread, almost exclusive use of questionnaires and tests, along with the statistical apparatus which is necessary for their subsequent processing and analysis. Paradoxically, however, this predominantly quantitative methodology was accompanied by the manifestation of intentions and guiding principles that stemmed from the qualitative tradition, which became apparent through the ample use that is made in the respective documents of terms such as *illuminative evaluation*, *formative evaluation*, *interaction* between the evaluators and the participants in the programmes, etc. Such vocabulary, however, contrasted sharply and overtly with everyday practice.

Thirdly, and especially in evaluation procedures which intended to follow the Stufflebeam model (CIPP) – based on the *input output* paradigm taken from economic theory, to which the elements of context and process are added –, the external evaluators' pretentions to explicitly intervene and carry out a practical reorientation of the programme concerned according to their own ideas collided with the demands of neutrality and impartiality placed on them by the institutions involved in the programme. Although it is not possible to generalize and state that this always happened in an explicit fashion, it seems at least as if there was a permanent temptation for the evaluators to behave in this way. Likewise, the temptation for the evaluators to intervene in some cases was the inevitable consequence of the programme itself, which demanded that the evaluators should in turn serve as trainers for intermediate-level authorities , which caused a certain confusion as to whether speak of self-evaluation, or external evaluation, or formative evaluation. One must not forget that almost all external evaluators working for Ministry of Education programmes were academics, who were involved in research on education, but that did not have much experience in carrying out evaluations. As a consequence of the pronounced politicization of the programmes and the subjectivity inherent in the evaluation procedure itself, there was an attempt to achieve credibility using a methodology that was theoretically objective and neutral. The problem was that in some programmes the evaluator was both an outside advisor and part of the programme, a fact, and as a result, the legitimation of the programme was not achieved and the credibility of the evaluation was easily called into question by the public.

In the fourth place, one of the characteristics of the evaluation documents and reports that were published – although only with a very limited distribution – was the usage of a very technical terminology (Sáez, M.J. and Carretero, A.J., 1991), which was barely comprehensible to people outside academic circles. On the other hand, the interventionist aspect of the programme became most evident in those parts of the reports dedicated to conclusions and recommendations. The data section was always presented separately from the report itself, and in a less public and less accessible fashion. Besides, the evaluation pattern followed was only seldomly made explicit, and hardly ever did the authors include any reflections as to the methodology used. Neither was there any discussion of the difficulties that arose during its application to the reality under evaluation. At best, the instruments used were indicated, which mostly consisted of translated questionnaires and tests which had only been slightly adapted to suit the subject to be evaluated.

In our opinion, these characteristics of the first evaluations on an institutional level carried out as a part of the Reform of the Spanish Educational System were basically caused by the lack of experience in evaluation of the designers. Evidently, there were some noteworthy exceptions, namely the evaluation of the Atenea Programme (on the use of computers in classrooms), carried out by OECD experts, which was partly based on art criticism and the limited use of panels, interviews and the observation of a small number of experiences. Basing their observations on a descriptive memorandum that had been elaborated by the persons responsible for the programme themselves, the evaluators performed a comparative analysis using models of computer applications in other OECD states.

Nevertheless, these evaluations should not focus on their contradictions or methodological problems, but rather on the value they have as initiatives which have filtered the meaning and the significance which evaluation has for the education authorities as an activity intrinsic to education and the educational system itself as a whole. This is especially true in cases, where evaluation is based on new ways of understanding learning and continuous teacher training. These first evaluations on a big scale have had the double merit of contributing to the fact that evaluation is now seen as a natural part of education, and of being preliminary attempts in the search for useful models of evaluation to be applied to programmes which have been adapted to the political and institutional environment of present-day Spain. In this line, there are now plans for the creation of a National Institute for Evaluation and Quality Control, which will be in charge of providing models and instruments for the evaluation of students, teachers, schools and study programmes, even though the exact methods it will employ are not yet known.

The present school evaluation standing held by Ministry of Education inspectors represent the closest we have come to fulfilling the aspirations of the future Evaluation Institute. The inspectors, using a list of indicators and a series of interview and observation scales, gather the relevant information in schools with a two-fold objective. On the one hand, they evaluate the management of the financial and curricular independence of these centres, following specific quality criteria similar to those proposed by the OECD, and on the other hand they provide the feed-back for the centres self-evaluation of their performance. Within this system there is a notorious confrontation between, on the one hand, the intentions of the educational administration to control and supervise both the independence of the centres and the competences in education granted to the Autonomous Regions by means of decentralization, and, on the other, the interest in supporting the centres themselves. It is still too early to analyze the effects of the role that has been conferred upon evaluation, but in the medium term we may expect some kind of response on behalf of both schools and teachers, due to the fact that, together with evaluation carried out by the body of inspectors, teachers and schools have been requested to report the self-evaluation they have to carry out on both curricular projects and the educational process (BOE, Nov 1992) they put into effect in the classrooms. Besides, they have to establish explicit criteria for the evaluation of students and pupils that has to be carried out by teachers according to the guidelines provided by the Educational Reform. Due to the complete absence of models which could facilitate this work and the lack of specific training in these matters, these evaluation requirements cause anxiety, confusion and uncertainty among the teachers.

We may conclude that in our opinion the evolution of evaluation here in Spain is conditioned by the following factors:

- A political framework defined by the relationship between central and regional governments.

- A professional context mainly influenced by the interests of civil servants and almost totally lacking participatory tradition, dominated by certain attitudes of resistance and tendencies to block initiatives because of the fear that these might be mere means of control and inspection.

- The lack of institutions and professionals specialized in evaluation and, consequently, of a real tradition of accountability and responsability in Spain. The existent concepts have been imported and mastered in academic spheres, but have little relation to experiences made in this country.

- The need to find a balance – and this constitutes part of the backbone of democratic soceities – between, on the one hand, individual and collective rights, and on the other, the demands for simplified and comprehensible forms of communication and information. At present, such forms are open to the use of a rhetoric that features a predominance of concepts that cannot always be clearly defined, such as *indicators*, *need*, *quality*, *attitudes*, *efficacy*, *objectivity*, *efficiency*, etc.

- The vindication brought forward by the citizens for greater clearness and transparency in both the presentation of programmes and the justification of administration expenditures, and the consideration of such elements as being essential for the legitimation of policies.

- And the democratic imperative that each and every one of the interests implied in the programmes be represented equitably.

A possible evaluation alternative

In this context and judging from our own experience with the evaluations we have carried out (Sáez, M.J., and Carretero, A., 1993) based on the qualitative methodology of the case study approach, we understand that the evaluation model that has to be developed in Spain, and which could at present satisfy the conditions we have pointed out, must be fundamentally based on negotiation. This implies interpreting evaluation as a negotiation process which facilitates a deeper understanding for all the audiences of the object to be evaluated, in order to give them the opportunity to bring forward their judgements on the subject. This is a two-dimensional principle: in the first place, because the evaluation must be the result of negotiation – that means, all parties implied in the matter to be subjected to evaluation have to participate, by means of agreements, in establishing the needs, the orientation and objectives which are to be covered by the evaluation; and, in the second place, because the effect of the evaluation will depend on its capacity to provide the minimum conditions, as regards both procedure and contents, that are necessary for the different parties

to achieve and agreement as to whether it is convenient to modify, to divulge or to eliminate a certain programme. This model of evaluation by negotiation is the legacy of those other models generated within the case study approach, particularly by B.Stake and by B.McDonald: that is, responsive evaluation and independent evaluation,the latter once being referred to as democratic evaluation.

Taking into account the above-mentioned two-fold dimension, the principles that define evaluation methodology would be the following:

1. The process of evaluation is to be carried out in a way which is ***impartial*** and ***independent*** with regard to both the party requesting the evaluation and the group it is directed at. Evaluators therefore have to act as intermediaries, relaying information between their clients and the object group. This they do by making substantial use of the instrument of negotiation from the beginning to the end of the process. External evaluators have to define clearly their roles in order not to get mixed up in the procedures of internal evaluation and self-evaluation. Efforts must be made to delimit the exact responsibilities of the evaluator – these are to be established by contract or written agreement.

2. Evaluation is to establish specific channels, both formal and informal ones, of ***communication*** between the groups involved; the fundamental aim of such channels is to contribute towards a more profound understanding of situations that arise. Evaluation is constituted as a temporary mediation between the different levels of responsibility of a specific programme.

3. The evaluation of programmes in situations involving many different groups and a variety of interests should guarantee in both its methodological procedures and reports the ***representation*** of the ideas and values of all participant groups in such a way that evaluation helps to clarify the different stands and thus facilitates decision-making, and also makes it possible for all parties involved to participate by explicitly expressing their opinions.

4. As a consequence, evaluation is conceived as a means by which the parties inolved can ***participate*** in the creation of operative channels of negotiation and a comparison of their different interests, values and beliefs based on dialogue.

5. Evaluation is to comply with the right of every citizen to be truthfully informed about the operation of the programmes. This means that each evaluation has to be documented by means of a ***public report*** showing the methodological procedures followed, the problems identified,the perspectives implied and the alternatives inferred. The language used for communicating the data and the created interpretations has to take into account the potential audience of the report, so that the information presented is complete and comprehensible.

6. Evaluation methodology is therefore to be of an eminently ***qualitative*** nature, insomuch as the interaction with the participant groups, the conception of the programmes and the contemplated actions as substantive cases are the factors that allow the interests, values and beliefs of the people and the groups to be explicitly

expressed in their respective contexts

Independence, communication, representation, participation, publication and qualitative methodology are the driving concepts of the evaluation by negotiation model we propose.

Nevertheless, when a methodology based on the representation of the points of view of all the participants in the programmes is accepted, it is understandable that the institution in charge has an interest in assuring to some extent its control over the evaluation or at least the possibility of a modest form of intervention.This might be possible to achieve by conceiving the evalution processes as learning processes for the inside evaluators and by primarily guaranteeing for the people in charge of the programme that all the formative and informative aspects are covered. This involves a challenge for the external evaluators, since they have to find a balance between their own professional interest in responding to the requirements of the evaluation managers and the right of the participant groups to be informed. The integration of an internal staff member in the evaluation team helps to achieve this balance, but simultaneously, when the information is to be presented, also makes the process of coming to an agreement on emphasis and details more difficult, especially when it comes to the elaboration of final reports. These problems can only be overcome with personal effort and good communication between inside and outside personel, even if this might imply more work. This means that negotiation processes that clarify the interests of the evaluators are always vital from a methodological point of view, especially when it comes to the transmission and the treatment of information, even though such processes might apparently diminish the outside evaluators' independence. On the other hand, this independence is always maintained, since in the end the external evaluators guarantee the credibility and the impartiality of the report, which after all is where they put at stake their own professionalism.

The social significance of a given evaluation will be shown by its capacity to enhance the participants's comprehension of what is happening in the programmes and, therefore, to promote a greater knowledge within an institution of its own workings. We must not forget that any evaluation of programmes has to face the reluctant attitude of the institutions, which perceive it as a measure of control, judgement and criticism of their actions as professionals. It is never easy to overcome this resistance, and it is not always possible, since even when it is possible to gain peoples confidence, there is a very peculiar atmosphere of confidentiality- due to their lack of experience in being evaluated and therefore to the fact that people's opinions might be manipulated, if the negative effects on their interests are not taken into account. This leads to a greater difficulty when it comes to assuring comprehension of the inferences and interpretations caused by the evaluator, which is supposedly of advantage for the processes of discussion and negotiation with the personnel involved.

On the other hand, the capacity of the evaluation-by-negotiation model to respond in a satisfactory manner to the factors of inside/outside relationship and intervention and institutional self-awareness, depends on the power of explanation conferred to its political and organizational analysis. That is to say, the empirical and theoretical foundation on which evaluation is based will generate the imperative of negotiation as a regulatory formula of assessment.

As a conclusion, in our opinion the challenge facing evaluation in Spain consists in facilitating two fundamental aspects:

- the professionalization of the work of the evaluators, conferring them their own entity, credibility and acknowledgment, so that evaluation, conceived as evaluation by negotiation, might contribute to create a democratic structure in society, from a methodologically competent and politically independent perspective;
- and bringing greater efficiency into the functioning of organisations by establishing more participatory models, based on the understanding of situations and personal responsibility, thus promoting systems capable of learning through organisational forms based on cooperation and fluent – that means, not hierarchic – communication channels.

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